

Slips, Trips and Falls Case Study

Case Study Title
Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention in The Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital (CWIUH).
Healthcare Establishment Name and Address
The Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital, Dolphin's Barn, Dublin 8.
Details of the Healthcare Establishment
The CWIUH is an established hospital in the south inner city providing a range of maternity, gynaecology, neonatal, and reproductive health services to over 9500 patients a year, with approximately 9000 infant deliveries in 2010. It has approximately 950 staff including medical, midwifery, nursing, allied services and support staff. It is also a teaching hospital for medical and midwifery students.
The Challenge / Scale of the Problem.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to 2008 a significant number of slips, trips and falls occurred annually, evenly affecting staff and patients. Between 70 to 90 were reported annually between 2004 and 2007.• The causes were many and different solutions had to be identified and managed for each. These had to be addressed in consultation with appropriate staff, managers, architects and builders etc.• There was a lack of appreciation of the scale of the problem, and how easy it would be to stop or reduce the number of incidents.• There was no one-stop source of information on how to prevent them.
The Solution (The plan, steps or methods that were devised to address the challenge).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incidents were reviewed and causes investigated. Staff and managers were made aware of the scale of the problem. Incidents are reviewed at Health and Safety Committee meetings, and included in annual Health and Safety reports presented to senior managers.• Staff and managers were encouraged to report no injury incidents. There was a noticeable increase in incidents reported.• A unique slip, trip and fall risk assessment template was prepared. Solutions were identified and discussed with appropriate staff and managers, and implemented.• Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention guidelines were prepared and distributed to each department. Additional guidelines were prepared for cleaning staff, and showers/bathrooms.• Managers were trained on their responsibilities to ensure the safety of their staff and patients.• Wearing of appropriate footwear was encouraged, and wearing inappropriate footwear discouraged.• S,T&F prevention is raised during health and safety training, and is a priority issue in the safety handbook, which has to be signed off by over 70% of staff since 2009.• Additional signs have been placed to warn of the dangers of slipping, the use of bath mats, keeping doors closed during showers, 'cap the cup' in the café and dining room, and not over-filling cups at water dispensers.• More spare floor mats are on standby in case of heavy rain.• Slip resistant flooring was introduced at the main entrance, in shower rooms, bathrooms, and in the kitchen.• A quarterly department safety checklist should be completed and potential problems should be reported to the appropriate department for correction e.g. Housekeeping.• An annual safety management checklist, which includes questions on slip, trip and fall prevention, should be completed by managers.

- A Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention checklist and guidelines are available on-line.
- A flat mop floor cleaning system replaced the traditional floor mopping in 2011. This cleans the floor using less water and dries more quickly.
- There has been a significant drop in the number of incidents over the last four years: 29 in 2009; 58 in 2010; 22 in 2011; and 6 in the first six months of 2012.

Practical Examples

(How the solution was implemented on a practical level, the most important points of the case study, the improvements and challenges encountered and management and employee participation).

- Consultation with staff and managers to make them aware of the issue and what could be done to reduce the causes.
- Informing managers of their responsibilities by arranging training sessions and information sheets for them.
- Encouraging staff and managers to report all incidents, even minor ones. This increased the number of reports.
- Greater understanding of staff and manager responsibilities and roles, and attitudes.
- More information is available to staff and patients.
- More emphasis on managing it as an on-going issue.
- Much fewer incidents occurring: less lost time, fewer claims, and fewer reportable accidents.
- There is now an emphasis on the improvements achieved.
- Housekeeping staff were met to discuss floor cleaning and agree on guidelines that would help them reduce the cause of incidents.
- A few styles of slip resistant safety shoes were tested to identify the most comfortable in the hope that more staff would wear them.